

VZCZCXRO1850
RR RUEHMA RUEHPA
DE RUEHAB #0568 1501648
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 301648Z MAY 06
FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1389
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS ABIDJAN 000568

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [KPKO](#) [IV](#)
SUBJECT: COTE D'IVOIRE: PILOT IDENTIFICATION PROGRAM
CONCLUDED ON MAY 27

REF: ABIDJAN 532 AND PREVIOUS

¶1. (U) Summary: From May 18 through 24, 4810 applicants were interviewed at seven sites in the pilot identification program. A total of 2601 birth certificates and 2188 certificates of nationality were approved after interviews averaging 40 minutes per person. The pilot identification program was extended by two days until May 27 due to high demand and as May 25 was a national holiday. End Summary.

¶2. (U) Numbers by region: In the government controlled south, a total of 1285 applicants were interviewed, 972 birth certificates were issued and 356 certificates of nationality were posted to an internet published list of qualified applicants. In the Zone of Confidence, 1406 applicants were interviewed, 965 birth certificates issued and 829 certificates of nationality posted. In the New Forces-held north, 2119 applicants were interviewed, 664 birth certificates issued and 1003 certificates of nationality posted.

¶3. (U) A workshop incorporating the National Identification Supervisory Commission (NISC), members of the Ivorian government, UN personnel, EU representatives, and the High Representative for Elections is scheduled for early June to analyze the results from the pilot program. The NISC, created in 2004, is a result of the Linas Marcoussis agreements and supervises the work done by the National Identification Office. No dates have yet been set for a national identification program.

¶4. (SBU) After the first day, the population was able to participate in the process without significant harassment from pro-FPI militias (though these continued to pass out literature calling for disarmament before identification). Nevertheless, the interview process remained overly drawn out and cumbersome. At the rate interviews were conducted during the pilot phase, it would take a very long time indeed to complete a national identification program. There were also complaints that the interviews, conducted by five magistrates, were intimidating to many participants. Finally, though called a pilot identification program, we note that this effort did not result in the issuance a single identity card. Without these, which would probably have to be issued at the same time that voters are registered, there can be no move to elections.
Hooks